

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (*Canceled*)

Claim 2. (*Canceled*)

Claim 3. (*Previously Presented*) A grip handle for an axially extending sports pole, said grip handle comprising:

 a peripheral wall adapted to surround an upper end portion of the sports pole;

 a thumb support extending from said peripheral wall for enabling transmission of an axially directed force to the pole with a thumb of the hand of a user, while allowing a mutual rotation of said peripheral wall between the hand of the user and said peripheral wall about an axis extending through said peripheral wall;

 said peripheral wall extending along an axis curved upwardly and away from the user, as the grip handle is held during the sport activity.

Claim 4. (*Previously Presented*) A grip handle for an axially extending sports pole, said grip handle comprising:

 a peripheral wall adapted to surround an upper end portion of the sports pole;

 a thumb support extending from said peripheral wall for enabling transmission of an axially directed force to the pole with a thumb of the hand of a user, while allowing a mutual rotation of said peripheral wall between the hand of the user and said peripheral wall about an axis extending through said peripheral wall;

 said peripheral wall being curved upwardly and away from the user, as the grip handle is held during the sport activity; and

 said peripheral wall being progressively enlarged in a direction extending upwardly from said thumb support.

Claim 5. (*Original*) A grip handle according to claim 3, wherein:
said thumb support constitutes a proximal phalanx thumb support.

Claim 6. (*Canceled*)

Claim 7. (*Currently Amended*) A sports pole comprising:
an axially extending upper end portion;
a grip handle at the upper end portion of the sports pole, said grip handle comprising a side wall and a proximal phalanx thumb support extending from said side wall for enabling transmission of an axially directed force to the pole with a proximal phalanx of a thumb of a user;
said grip handle further comprising a wrist strap, said wrist strap including an inner branch extending downwardly along said side wall of said grip handle, at least to said support for the thumb, said wrist strap providing said support for the thumb.

Claim 8. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein:
said side wall has an intermediate zone;
said support for the thumb extends so as to project from said intermediate zone of said side wall of said grip handle.

Claim 9. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein:
said support for the thumb has a rounded convex upper surface so as to conform to a curvature of a surface of the thumb in engagement with said upper surface when a hand of the user is closed on said grip handle during use of the sports pole.

Claim 10. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 8, wherein:

 said grip handle extends along a longitudinal axis; and

 said support for the thumb is inclined angularly and rearwardly with respect to the longitudinal axis of said grip handle during use of the sports pole.

Claim 11. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein:

 said grip handle further comprises an opposite side wall, said opposite side wall being opposite to said side wall of said thumb support;

 said opposite side wall has a zone with a convexity, said convexity of said zone of said opposite side wall having a shape and dimensions to be housed ergonomically in a palm of the user's hand in a closed position of the hand of the user around the grip handle, while the thumb of the user is engaged with said thumb support.

Claim 12. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 11, wherein:

 said grip handle has either a right hand configuration for a right hand of the user or a left hand configuration for a left hand of the user;

 said right hand configuration of said grip handle comprises, when viewed by the user, said thumb support extending from a left side of said grip handle and said convexity being on a right side of said grip handle;

 said left hand configuration of said grip handle comprises, when viewed by the user, said thumb support extending from a right side of said grip handle and said convexity being on a left side of said grip handle.

Claim 13. (*Canceled*)

Claim 14. (*Currently Amended*) A sports pole according to claim 7, ~~13~~, wherein:
said wrist strap surrounds the thumb of the user, at least partially, in an area of a proximal phalanx of the thumb and/or of a joint connecting the proximal phalanx of the thumb and a metacarpus of the thumb.

Claim 15. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein said sports pole is a ski pole.

Claim 16. (*Canceled*)

Claim 17. (*Currently Amended*) A sports pole comprising:
an upper end portion extending along a longitudinal axis;
a grip handle at the upper end portion for gripping with a hand of a user, said grip handle comprising a first side wall and a second side wall, and a thumb support extending from said first side wall for enabling transmission of an axially directed force to the pole with a thumb of the hand of a user, said first side wall extending upwardly without an obstruction projecting outwardly from said side wall above said thumb support; and

a strap for connecting the hand of a user to said grip handle while allowing an unobstructed mutual rotation between the hand of the user and said grip handle;

said strap being connected to said grip handle by means of a pivotal connection for facilitating said mutual rotation between the hand of the user and said grip handle from a beginning of an impulse phase on the sports pole, whereby the hand of the user is closed on said grip handle, to an end of the impulse phase on the sports pole, whereby the hand of the user is not closed on said grip handle.

Claim 18. (*Canceled*)

Claim 19. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 17, wherein:

 said thumb support constitutes a proximal phalanx thumb support.

Claim 20. (*Original*) A sports pole according to claim 17, wherein said sports pole is a ski pole.

Claim 21. (*Canceled*)

Claim 22. (*Canceled*)

Claim 23. (*Canceled*)

Claim 24. (*Previously Presented*) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein:

 said grip handle comprises a side wall and a proximal phalanx thumb support extending from said side wall for enabling transmission of an axially directed force to the pole with a proximal phalanx of a thumb of a user when the user's hand is closed upon said grip handle during use of the sports pole.

Claim 25. (*Canceled*)

Claim 26. (*Canceled*)

Claim 27. (Previously Presented) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein:
said proximal phalanx support has a width, extending along said side wall, sufficient
to support only the proximal phalanx of the thumb of the user.

Claim 28. (Canceled)

Claim 29. (Canceled)

Claim 30. (Previously Presented) A grip handle according to claim 3, wherein:
the thumb support comprises a thumb support surface extending away from said
peripheral wall along a substantially straight line to a remote end of the thumb support.

Claim 31. (Canceled)

Claim 32. (Previously Presented) A grip handle according to claim 3, wherein:
said peripheral wall extending upwardly without an obstruction projecting outwardly
from said peripheral wall above said thumb support.

Claim 33. (Canceled)

Claim 34. (Previously Presented) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein:
the proximal phalanx thumb support comprises a surface extending away from said
side wall along a substantially straight line to a remote end of the proximal phalanx thumb
support.

Claim 35. (*Canceled*)

Claim 36. (*Previously Presented*) A sports pole according to claim 7, wherein:
said side wall extends upwardly without an obstruction projecting outwardly from
said side wall above said proximal phalanx thumb support.

Claim 37. (*Canceled*)

Claim 38. (*Canceled*)